



West Sound Beekeepers Association  
[www.westsoundbees.org](http://www.westsoundbees.org)

Volume 9, Issue 5



# BUZZWORD

May 2006

## NEXT MEETING

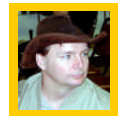
**Tuesday – April 18, 2006**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**Stedman's Bee Supplies**  
**Silverdale**

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

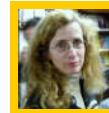
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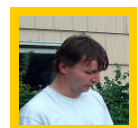
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## x Refreshment Schedule

May – Joe Higdon, ??

June – Help needed

July – Help needed

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## Program Committee

Jay Miller 253-857-6417

**?????Need 2 Volunteers?????**

## **EDITOR'S CORNER:**

By Jerry Hominda

I am open for any topics, information, and idea sharing from any members. If you have a thought you would like to include in the newsletter you can e-mail me or send it by postal mail. I would be more than happy to include it.

I look forward to hearing from anyone in the future.

My e-mail address is: [goldenbee@juno.com](mailto:goldenbee@juno.com) and my mailing address is:  
7828 Ray Nash Gig Harbor, WA 98338

If we had keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence.

**George Elliot** 1819-80: "*Middlemarch* (1871-2)"

### **Message From President Basil:**

Here is an article from "The New York Times" submitted by Basil Gunther. The article raises some very interesting questions and shares a different perspective for thinking about honey bees-outside the box concept. In order to be a successful beekeeper in today's world we have to move on from the traditional thought processes of old school bee keeping.

May 2, 2006  
Side Effects

#### **'Mr. Speaker, I'd Like to Do the Waggle'**

By **JAMES GORMAN**

When it comes to bees making decisions, my question is whether the bee or the hive is the individual.

I didn't come up with this question out of the blue, although the blue is actually where most of my ideas come from. The blue is one of my best sources.

This question, however, came from reading American Scientist. In the current issue there's an article titled "Group Decision Making in Honey Bee Swarms," by

Thomas D. Seeley of Cornell, P. Kirk Visscher at the University of California, Riverside, and Kevin M. Passino at Ohio State.

After Dr. Seeley and colleagues present their findings -- which I'll get to -- they suggest that humans could learn something about group decision making from the bees. The bees, it seems, almost always make good decisions. Groups of humans have a bit more trouble, or as Friedrich Nietzsche wrote, in "Beyond Good and Evil," according to the article, "Madness is the exception in individuals but the rule in groups."

Dr. Seeley is a bit more cheery than Nietzsche. I suppose that's not a very high bar, but he writes that groups can make good decisions, and that the success of bees could offer humans some guidance.

Here's how the honeybees do it. When hives of honeybees get too big, they split up. The old queen flies off with a retinue of 10,000 bees or so -- a swarm.

Over the course of several days, as the swarm waits clustered together on a tree branch, scout bees search for real estate and come back to do waggle dances to promote their finds.

Scouts can be recruited from one site to a better one and start dancing for it. Eventually, agreement is reached, and by the time the swarm is ready to fly the scouts are unified in leading the swarm to a new home.

How do the bees decide? By consensus? Voting? After several experiments, the researchers concluded that the swarm does not wait for consensus. It senses when there are enough scouts concentrating on one site -- a "quorum" of 15 to 20 -- and that's when the bees get ready to move. As they warm up their flight muscles for an hour or so, the rest of the scouts usually come around to supporting the best site, so a consensus is achieved before flight.

What's good about this process, the authors say, is that autonomous individuals gather information and present a wide range of knowledge in the open marketplace of waggle dancing. Dr. Seeley writes that the study of how bees decide things could "help human groups achieve collective intelligence and avoid collective folly."

Maybe. Much as I would like to see the waggle dance replace the roll call Congress (Senator Kennedy and Senator Lott in the aisles?), I can't help wondering whether a hive finding a hollow tree isn't more like me buying a TV than it is like a government deciding on war, taxes or prayer in schools.

Unlike members of Congress, individual bees all want the same thing. Individual bees don't seem to have different religions, different views on a social system in which a lot of them don't ever get to have sex or different taste in music. No bee lobbyists have yet been identified.

From my point of view, as a voter and a shopper, I think a swarm is like a single person. I don't know about everybody else, but when I'm shopping for something, let's say a TV, and I'm having trouble deciding, my head feels a lot like a swarm of bees.

I read the consumer advice, I look at Web sites, I try to figure out what HDTV really is, I fill my head with prices, taxes, delivery costs, reliability of online stores -- until the neurological waggle dancing of different opinions in my mind becomes almost intolerable.

Then, out of the blue, or so I used to think, comes the thought that I should just stop it and buy one. Maybe my brain has actually sensed a quorum of ideas, or neurons or electrical impulses all pointing to the huge screen with 0 percent interest until 2008.

**Or maybe not. Bees make the right decisions, and they don't use credit.**

## **Minutes From the April 17, 2006, Meeting Held 7-9 PM at Stedman's Bee Supply**

Submitted By: Secretary Chanetta Ludwig; chanettal@yahoo.com  
Basil Gunther, President, presided at the meeting.

### **New Business**

Election of New Officers:

- President: Basil Gunther
- Vice President: George Purkett
- Treasurer: Dennis Heney
- Secretary: Judy Gunther
- The association thanks all the past officers for their dedication, contributed time and efforts

### **Discussion:**

- Jerry Hominda has sugar for sale.
- Thyme is being used in the form of Appear for the Mites.
- George Purkett and Jerry also discussed a club apiary in the mountains for getting fireweed in the summer

- Package bees would be in April 29th. Talk to Al Stedman about the specific date.

**Door Prize Winner:**

Brandon Clayton won the door prize, a green drone board!!! Congratulations!!!

**Program:**

- Duane Kinney gave a very informative presentation of the top bar hive. He started with a top bar and a small start of beeswax attached to the top bar. Using 5 pieces of plywood and paneling nails. He used a screened bottom board and found 3 out of 5 hives survived.
- More information can be found on BeeWrangel.com and beesource.com;
- two additional web sites are:
  - <http://bwrangler.madpage.com/bee/tbh.htm>
  - <http://www.beesource.com/cgi-bin/ubbcgi/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=forum;>

I have striven not to laugh at human  
Actions, not to weep at them, nor to hate  
Them, but to understand them.  
**Baruch Spinoza 1632-77; "Tractatus Politicus"**

**Summertime Club Mountain Apiary**

Contacts: George Purkett & Jerry Hominda

**What is a summertime apiary?**

Sign up your bees for summer camp, if they are interested. Around the first couple of weeks of July, the blackberry nectar flow dries up in most of Kitsap County. As the hive population is high, the bees begin to consume the honey they stored up during May and June. This is an ideal time to move bees to better pasture so they do not consume your potential harvest.

This year, Jerry (the newsletter editor) has offered to share his prime summer rented pastures with the association at minimal cost. The location is above Enumclaw on Weyerhaeuser property behind locked gates. Access is restricted so we must go with Jerry when we go. Only Jerry's vehicles are allowed past the gate. I (George) took my bees there last year and they all want to go back this year. Last year, the cost was \$6 per hive, Expect something close to that, this year.

### **Why should you put your bees in the mountains?**

It gives the bees 2-3 months of good forage when they need it. Strong colonies will produce a honey crop...Average colonies will build to strong colonies...provided good weather. There is a chance weak colonies will fail and then get robbed out...but that can occur in the front yard as well. The beekeepers clustering together on visits to the beeyard tend to learn from each other...sometimes it is things to do and sometimes it is things not to do. Last year, I learned not to have western frames in a deep super...what a mess that was to even remove from the hive. It also makes your neighbors (or spouse, in-laws, etc.) happy to know that the bees are away on summer vacation.

### **When should you move your hives to the mountains?**

Late June will start the endeavor with a work party or two to clean the beeyards up, set up electric fences for keeping the bears out, and to check the progress of the fireweed to time the delivery of the bees. Early to mid June (date depending upon the fireweed) We will set up a time and date for everyone to bring bees to one of Jerry's yards in Gig Harbor to be loaded on a truck for community transport to the Beeyards.

I would guess some will continue on to set out bees and some will get to go back home and go to bed. Throughout the summer, Jerry visits hives regularly and we will arrange with him to go visit bees. Around the first of September the supers can be removed and those that treat can start their fall treatments. A couple weeks later, bring back the bees to the staging yard in gig harbor for transfer and return to your home.

### **How to move bees and prepare.**

Here is the short of how to move bees. (1) the bottom needs to be attached to the lower brood chamber with 4 hive staples...see hive in club apiary as example. (2) Remove Excess filled supers to keep the weight reasonable. (3) put a ratcheting strap around the hive. (4) (optional) put a folded screen to block the entrance. (5) load the hive. (6) strap the hive down if there is a chance of having it fall over. (7) retighten the straps. Did I mention you will probably be doing (4) thru (7) in the late evening. If the hive was to be moved during the day in the summer, the top would need to be removed and replaced with a screened top. I have seen a hive melt down during shipping and it is not a pretty site. Make sure all hives and all supers are marked with your name so if a problem comes up, you can be notified. Also, Hives are heavy, Do not hurt your back when loading them.

### **Warnings-unlikely occurrences, but possible?**

It is possible that your hive can be dropped during transport, fall apart due to rot, eaten by bears, fall off a truck, catch a communicable disease, be shot by disoriented hunters, or befall a calamity that I have not thought of in the last 2 minutes.

We take no responsibility and accept no liability.

If you are interested please let me know your name, phone, email, and the expected number of hives. Also let me know how firm your interest and please ask if you have any questions.

George Purkett

Email: [vp@westsoundbeees.org](mailto:vp@westsoundbeees.org)

phone (360) 895-9116

### **Professional-Expert Contact Information**

A great place to ask questions and get information on new technology, medications, bee species, and much more is at the Beltsville Bee Research Laboratory (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site>) or you can contact a Jeff Pettis, Research Entomologist, USDA-ARS Bee Research Laboratory, Bldg. 476 BARC-E, Beltsville, MD. 20705, Tel. (301) 504-7299, e-mail [pettisj@ba.ars.usda.gov](mailto:pettisj@ba.ars.usda.gov)

I have personally (news-letter editor) sent e-mails asking questions concerning medications and they have always been good about answering-remember this laboratory is paid for with your tax dollars-they are there for you. This is also the lab where you can send bees to be analyzed for any suspicious problem (Trachea mites?).

### **For your information**

The FDA has approved the use of TYLAN (tylosin tartrate) Soluble for the control of American foulbrood (*Paenibacillus larvae*) in honey bees. Mixing Directions: Mix 200mg tylosin in 20g confectioners/powdered sugar. Use immediately. Specifics for the label (Eli Lilly and Company) can be obtained at the [www.Elanco.com](http://www.Elanco.com) web page. Highlights from the label regarding honey bees are below. Before using tylosin it is highly recommended to go to Beltsville Lab web page and read all their information concerning the antibiotic-it is imperative users follow the instructions when using this product.

### **Bee Manager's Note:**

By Jerry Hominda

This is kind of an exciting time of year for bee keeping-if your bees survived the mild winter or if you purchased packages or splits. For our part of the country we have had some pretty nice days in the last month-your bees should be building up getting ready to swarm and capitalize on the next nectar flow-blackberries. It is exciting to lift the lid of each hive and see nothing but solid bees working between every frame, new white wax being built, bees loaded with pollen at the entrance, cells being filled with eggs, and several frames from the center out full of eggs and larvae. Remember one important thing about this time of year all your hives should be relatively similar in appearance and activity-if not something is wrong-no queen, no food, disease, plugged entrance, etc.

I got an unusual surprise approximately a month ago-a large colony (two deep boxes) of bees moved into some dead out boxes I had stacked outside. Hard to tell if it was a

swarm or some disturbed bees leaving a highly disease infected apiary. Pretty early for a swarm to occur, typically my bees begin the swarm process mid May through the end of June, but nothing is typical or traditional with bee keeping today-it is all new age.

Some primary goals the beekeeper should strive for this time of year is:

1. **Managing the colony so it can build to a large population in preparation for the next nectar flow.**
2. **Swarm control-if your colony swarms there goes the population of bees you were counting on for the next nectar flow.**
3. **Make sure they have plenty of room and are getting all the combs ready-necessary for honey storage.**

If you have strong colonies and weak colonies this is the time of year you perform balancing acts. The strong colonies can be used to strengthen the weak hives which also helps swarm control in the strong colonies. Typically weak colonies have no problem accepting frames of brood and nurse bees this helps them build their population. One natural rule I try to apply to bee keeping is that everything that occurs in the colony is perpetuated by a function and it is all proportionate. The queen continues to lay more eggs as the population increases, as more nectar and pollen is brought in, when the days are warming, but she will only lay the amount of eggs that can be properly cared for-all dependent on population size.

[Have fun working bees](#)



Basil's new addition to the family!